

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 3 BANGKOK 1900

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS:
SUBJ: DERIAN JANUARY 18 BANGKOK NEWS CONFERENCE

USIA FOR IEA, IOP/M, IBS, IPS, IOR/RIM, GENEVA FOR DERIAN

FOLLOWING IS THE USIS-PREPARED TRANSCRIPT OF THE LATE-NIGHT NEWS
CONFERENCE PATRICA DERIAN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HUMAN
RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, HELD JANUARY 18 IN BANGKOK AT
THE CONCLUSION OF HER FOUR-DAY VISIT TO THAILAND. IMMEDIATELY
FOLLOWING THE NEWS CONFERENCE, SHE FLEW TO GENEVA.

(BEGIN TRANSCRIPT)

QUESTION: DID THE OCTOBER 6 PRISONERS SAY ANYTHING SIGNIFICANT TO
YOU OR GIVE YOU A MESSAGE TO TAKE BACK TO WASHINGTON WITH YOU?

ANSWER: IT'S MY POLICY WHEN I MEET PEOPLE WHO ARE IN PRISON, AND
GENERALLY WHEN I TALK TO PRIVATE CITIZENS OR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS
IN CONVERSATIONS, NOT TO CHARACTERIZE WHAT THEY'VE SAID, PARTI-
CULARLY WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE IN PRISON, I THINK THAT IT'S NOT A
GOOD IDEA, THAT IT MIGHT IN ANY COUNTRY JEOPARDIZE THEIR RELAT-
IONSHIPS IF I WOULD CHARACTERIZE WHAT THEY WOULD SAY INCORRECTLY.
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THEY ARE ESSENTIALLY PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS. I JUST DON'T TAKE THAT
CHANCE WITH WHAT PEOPLE HAVE TO SAY TO ME. IT WAS A VERY INTERES-
TING DISCUSSION FOR ME. IT WAS VERY USEFUL FOR ME. IT WAS ALSO VERY
MOVING.

QUESTION: WHAT, THEN, IS YOUR PERSONAL IMPRESSION OF THE
OCTOBER 6 CASE?

ANSWER: I'M VERY GLAD THAT THEY HAVE LEGAL COUNSEL. I THINK THAT IT IS . . . YOU START WITH THE PREMISE THAT THE STATE IS ALWAYS MIGHTIER THAN ANY CITIZEN. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS CHARGED IN SOME WAY BY THE STATE BE ABLE TO PROTECT HIMSELF OR HERSELF. AND THE INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED MANNER OF PROTECTING YOURSELF IS TO BE CHARGED SO THAT YOU KNOW WHAT THE CHARGES ARE AGAINST YOU; TO HAVE LEGAL COUNSEL OF YOUR OWN CHOOSING; TO HAVE A TIMELY TRIAL IN AN OPEN COURT SO THAT YOU MAY PRESENT YOUR CASE AND ALL SIDES CAN BE HEARD. THAT IS ESSENTIAL TO EVERY HUMAN BEING IN EVERY COUNTRY, BECAUSE YOU CAN'T LIVE SOMEWHERE WITHOUT A GOVERNMENT, SO YOU MUST ALWAYS BE ABLE TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THE MIGHT OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE GOVERNMENT, EVEN IF IT IS CHARACTERIZED AS A WEAK GOVERNMENT, IS ALWAYS STRONGER THAN THE INDIVIDUAL. THE FACT THAT THEY'RE BEING TRIED IN OPEN COURT, IN FULL PUBLIC VIEW WITH LEGAL COUNSEL IS VERY IMPORTANT.

QUESTION: (NIGEL STARR, AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING COMMISSION) IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS, WAS THERE ANY ANYTHING THAT YOU SAW OR LEARNED IN YOUR TRIP TO THAILAND WHICH HAS DISTURBED YOU?

ANSWER: PEOPLE WHO WORK IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS ALWAYS FEEL DEEP CONCERN WHEN MARTIAL LAW OR EMERGENCY PROCEDURES ARE ENACTED, BECAUSE IN ALMOST EVERY CASE, THEY SUSPEND CIVIL PROTECTIONS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE SOCIETY. THAT IS A MATTER OF UNCLASSIFIED

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CONCERN. AT THE SAME TIME, THIS IS A NEW GOVERNMENT, TWO MONTHS OLD, THERE ARE SOME SIGNIFICANT GUIDE POSTS THAT I THINK SHOW THAT THERE'S POSSIBLY A NEW DIRECTION HERE, AND I FEEL ENCOURAGED BY THAT. WE LOOKED FOR TRENDS. WE LOOKED FOR SUBSTANCE. I THINK THAT A SUBSTANTIVE THING IS THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTIONS, THE PRESS BEING ABLE TO COVER THE NEWS -- A FREE PRESS IS VERY IMPORTANT.

QUESTION: I ASKED BECAUSE YOU'VE GONE ON RECORD, ACCORDING TO A JOURNALIST NAMED KAMM IN THE STATES, AS SAYING THAT THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT WHICH DISTURBED YOU THAT YOU'VE SEEN ON THE REST OF YOUR TOUR IN ASIA. YOU TALK ABOUT CIVIL LIBERTIES BEING HEAVELY RESTRICTED, ACCORDING TO THE CABLE THAT I HAVE. YOU SAY THAT SOME HEADS OF GOVERNMENT ARE REFERRING TO CRISES . . .

ANSWER: "HEAVILY RESTRICTED" ARE NOT MY WORDS.

QUESTION: WELL THAT'S PERHAPS PARAPHRASED, BUT YOU SAY HEADS OF GOVERNMENT HAVE REFERRED TO CRISIS OR EMERGENCY WHICH IS TEN OR MORE YEARS OLD, IS OUT OF DATE. IS THERE ANYTHING LIKE THAT IN THAILAND WHICH YOU FEEL SPECIFICALLY SHOULD BE CHANGED?

ANSWER: WELL, I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I DO IN MY WORK WHAT I'M TRYING

TO DO IS TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS WITH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT. I'M NOT TRYING TO MAKE HEADLINES. SO I GENERALLY TALK IN A GENERAL WAY. I'VE BEEN TO A NUMBER OF ASIAN COUNTRIES. I THINK THAT THE POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE IS IMMINENT IN EACH COUNTRY. I THINK THAT THERE ARE PROBLEMS WHICH THE CITIZENRY HAVE RECOGNIZED IN EACH COUNTRY AND WHICH GOVERNMENTS RECOGNIZED. WHEN HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BEGIN TO OCCUR IN A COUNTRY, IT'S GENERALLY IN RESPONSE TO SOME EMERGENCY, SOME CRISIS. USUALLY CITIZENS ARE USUALLY GLAD TO HAVE THE CRISIS . . . TO RESTORE ORDER. BUT THAT'S FOR A LIMITED PERIOD OF TIME. THEY EXPECT EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND MARTIAL LAW TO COME IN AND SOLVE THE PROBLEM IN A TIMELY WAY, AND THEN TO GO BACK TO DUE PROCESS AND THE OTHER ASPECTS OF A COMFORTABLE SOCIETY AND A FREE SOCIETY. AND MANY OF THE EMERGENCIES IN ASIA HAVE BEEN OVER FOR SOME YEARS.

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SOME COUNTRIES STILL HAVE PROBLEMS, ALL COUNTRIES ARE GOING TO HAVE PROBLEMS ALL THE TIME, BUT ONCE YOU SUSPEND CIVIL PROTECTIONS, ONCE YOU SUSPEND DUE PROCESS, IT'S VERY HARD TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO REINSTATE IT. BUT THERE ARE SOME SIGNS IN SOME OF THE COUNTRIES I VISITED THAT SENSITIVITY TO THIS PROBLEM HAS BEEN HEIGHTENED. HUMAN RELATIONS PROBLEMS CREATE TENSIONS BETWEEN OTHER COUNTRIES AND THE UNITED STATES, AND OTHER COUNTRIES AS WELL AS THE UNITED STATES. SO WE WANT TO MAKE SURE WHEN WE SPEAK WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS

NTS, THAT THEY HAVE A VERY CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT OUR POLICY IS, SINCE IT IS IN A SENSE QUITE NEW, IT IS QUITE SPECIFIC. AND WE WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT THERE ARE NO MISUNDERSTANDINGS. WE ARE NOT GOING INTO ANY COUNTRY SAYING "YOU MUST DO THIS." WE CAN'T LET ONE PERSON OUT OF JAIL. WE CAN'T CHANGE ONE LAW. WE CAN'T CHANGE ONE PROCESS, WE CAN'T CHANGE ONE PROCEDURE. WHAT WE CAN DO IS TRY TO EXPRESS THE PRINCIPLES OF OUR DEMOCRACY AND THE PRINCIPLES OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS DECLARATION.

QUESTION: THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT, SO I WONDER WHETHER I CAN PIN YOU DOWN TO BE SPECIFIC ABOUT A PARTICULAR INCIDENT OR A PARTICULAR PLACE WHERE YOU THINK THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS PERHAPS IS BEING VIOLATED?

ANSWER: WELL, IN PLACES WHERE THERE ARE EMERGENCY PROCEDURES OR UNCLASSIFIED

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MARTIAL LAW OR BOTH, IT IS ALMOST INEVITABLE THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ARE VIOLATED. YOU CAN'T SUSPEND CIVIL PROTECTION AND FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH YOUR HUMAN RIGHTS.

QUESTION: YOU'RE REFERRING PERHAPS TO INDONESIA AND THE POLITICAL PRISONERS THERE?

ANSWER: NOW YOU KNOW THIS AREA AS WELL AS I DO AND I REALLY DON'T WANT TO MAKE...

QUESTION: BUT THE PEOPLE LISTENING TO AUSTRALIAN RADIO DON'T.

QUESTION: MS. DERIAN, MAY I ASK IF THERE ARE ANY COUNTRIES IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD THAT POP TO MIND THAT DON'T HAVE THE SORTS OF RESTRICTIVE MEASURES WHICH YOU JUST POINTED OUT?

ANSWER: IN THE COUNTRIES WHICH I HAVE VISITED, NO.

QUESTION: THEN THOSE COUNTRIES ARE . . .

ANSWER MANILA, SINGAPORE, INDONESIA, THAILAND ARE THE COUNTRIES I HAVE VISITED.

QUESTION: WHERE DOES THAILAND RANK IF YOU HAD TO . . .

ANSWER: WE DON'T MAKE A LIST. THE COUNTRIES DIFFER. THEY AREN'T ALL LUMPED INTO ONE BAG. THEY ARE IN DIFFERENT STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT. THEY'RE IN DIFFERENT STAGES OF HISTORY. THEY'RE IN DIFFERENT STAGES OF THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES. SO I REALLY DO WANT TO MAKE IT VERY CLEAR THAT I AM NOT SAYING THAT THESE COUNTRIES ARE ALIKE. THOSE ARE THE COUNTRIES WHICH I VISITED, AND THERE ARE MATTERS TO DISCUSS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN EACH OF THESE COUNTRIES. THEY ARE NOT ALL THE SAME.

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QUESTION: GENE CROSS FROM THE ASIAN WALL STREET JOURNAL TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION USED ITS CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN ASIA AND ELSEWHERE AS A WEDGE, AS A CARROT, FOR BILATERAL AID AND MILITARY CREDITS AND OTHER THINGS?

ANSWER: WELL, WHEN I CAME TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT, PEOPLE KEPT TALKING TO ME ABOUT CARROTS AND STICKS. BOTH VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND INTERESTED ORGANIZATIONS AND PEOPLE WHO'D BEEN THINKING ABOUT THE PROBLEM INTERNATIONALLY FOR A LONG A TIME. FRANKLY, I'M NOT TOO KEEN ON CARROTS AND STICKS. LEGISLATION THAT WE HAVE THAT PERTAINS TO HUMAN RIGHTS ISN'T TO COERCE OR FORCE ANY COUNTRY TO CHANGE ITS PRACTICES. IT IS ONLY THAT THE UNITED STATES DISTANCE ITSELF, BECAUSE WE DO NOT WISH TO BE PARTICIPANTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, SO IF WE DON'T SEE A TREND, WE HAVE A TENDENCY TO PULL BACK ACCORDING TO THE LAWS THAT ARE ENACTED ON SECURITY ASSISTANCE, INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND AID.

QUESTION: ISN'T THAT A FORM OF COERCION, IS IT NOT?

ANSWER: NO, NO IT ISN'T. THE MONEY, THE ASSISTANCE, THE MATERIALS THAT WE SEND, WE SEND FREELY IN ORDER TO HELP COUNTRIES, TO AID IN DEVELOPMENT. IF WE FEEL THAT WE ARE NOT REALLY ASSISTING THE PEOPLE IN THAT WAY, IF WE BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE PROBLEMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS THAT ARE NOT BEING ADDRESSED -- AND I THINK IN THAILAND THEY ARE BEING ADDRESSED -- THEN WE ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO STEP BACK. AND I DON'T CONSIDER THAT COERCION. MY IDEA OF COERCION IS TO GO IN AND SAY "IF YOU DON'T SHAPE UP, WE'RE NOT GOING TO GIVE YOU ANY OF OUR MONEY." YOU KNOW -- THERE'S A MATTER OF TONE, A MATTER OF SUBSTANCE, A MATTER OF STYLE ABOUT THE THING, AND THAT'S NOT WHAT WE'RE DOING. I DID SAY THAT -- (COMMENT, ASIDE).

QUESTION: THERE ARE 4000 AMERASIAN CHILDREN IN THAILAND. I WONDER IF YOU CONSIDER THESE CHILDREN PART OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE YOU ARE WORKING ON?

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ANSWER: FOUR THOUSAND WHAT . . I'M SORRY . . .

QUESTION: CHILDREN BORN TO THE AMERICAN SOLDIERS WHEN THEY ARE HERE, AND THEY ARE ABANDONED BY THEIR FATHERS.

ANSWER: I THINK IT IS A HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM FOR CHILDREN WHO

DON'T HAVE DADDIES TO HELP THEM. IT HAPPENS EVERYWHERE. I DIDN'T
KNOW THAT. YOU'RE THE FIRST PERSON WHO'S MENTIONED THAT TO ME.
THAT'S GOOD. -- THAT'S SOMETHING THAT I DIDN'T KNOW THAT I DO
KNOW NOW.

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QUESTION: BECAUSE THESE CHILDREN, ALTHOUGH THEY WERE BORN IN
THAILAND, THEY DO NOT ACTUALLY ENTITLE TO THE THAI NATIONALITY,
AND THEY ARE . . .

ANSWER: ARE THEY STATELESS? CHILDREN WHO HAVE NO CITIZENSHIP?

QUESTION: YEAH.

ANSWER: I DIDN'T KNOW THAT. I WILL LOOK INTO IT AND LEARN MORE.
I'M GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR TELLING ME ABOUT THAT. PEOPLE OUGHT
NOT TO BE STATELESS. ESPECIALLY CHILDREN.

QUESTION: DO YOU THINK THE UNITED STATES SHOULD STOP SELLING ARMS
TO ANY COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD THAT ARE HAVING DISPUTES IN ORDER
TO PRESERVE THE HUMAN RIGHTS?

ANSWER: I'M NOT SURE I UNDERSTAND YOUR QUESTION. THERE ARE SOME
COUNTRIES WHERE THERE ARE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS WHERE WE DO
CONTINUE TO SUPPLY AND SELL ARMS IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE GEOGR-
APHIC INTEGRITY OF THE LAND, NOT TO BE USED AGAINST THE PEOPLE.
AND THERE ARE CLEAR UNDERSTANDINGS IN THOSE ARRANGEMENTS THAT
THINLA THAT WE SELL AND GIVE ARE NOT USED AGAINST THE CITIZENS
OF THE COUNTRY. BUT THERE IS ALSO ANOTHER CONSIDERATION, AND THAT
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IS THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES, SO THAT THERE ARE SOME POINTS IN THE WORLD WHERE WE FEEL OBLIGED TO CONTINUE TO SUPPLY GOVERNMENTS, TO PROTECT THEIR GEOGRAPHIC INTEGRITY BECAUSE WE THINK THAT IT IS PART OF THE SAFETY OF THE REGION AND AN INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES AND SURROUNDING NATIONS. SOUTH KOREA WOULD BE AN EXAMPLE OF THAT. ONE MORE?

QUESTION: ID DID NOT SEE THE STORIES THAT CAME OUT OF YOUR VISIT IN MANILA, BUT DID YOU MEET BENIGNO AQUINO WHEN YOU WERE THERE?

ANSWER: ID DID. I VISITED HIM IN PRISON.

QUESTION: UNDERSTANDING YOUR RELUCTANCE TO TALK ABOUT INDIVIDUAL CONVERSATIONS, COULD YOU TELL US WHAT YOU FEEL TO BE HIS GENERAL POSITION NOW?

ANSWER: OH, I WOULD CERTAINLY NOT WANT TO CHARACTERIZE HIS POSITION. I WOULD TELL YOU THAT I THOUGHT HE WAS A PERSON OF INCREDIBLE FORTITUDE, A DEEP UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF DEMOCRATIC VALUES, A VERY SERIOUS MAN. BUT I WOULD NOT DARE SPEAK FOR SUCH AN ELOQUENT MAN.

QUESTION: YOU DON'T KNOW WHETHER OR NOT HE'S BEEN OFFERED AMNESTY.

ANSWER: THE MATTER OF AMNESTY FOR SENATOR AQUINO SEEMS TO BE IN A KIND OF NO-MAN'S LAND RIGHT NOW.

QUESTION: WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

ANSWER: NO-MAN'S LAND . . . THERE IS NOTHING TO KNOW ABOUT AMNESTY.

QUESTION: ONE OF THE MAJOR CRITICISMS OF THE AMERICAN HUMAN UNCLASSIFIED

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RIGHTS CAMPAIGN IS THAT IT IS INDEED ETHNOCENTRIC OR PAROCHIAL IN NATURE, AND I WONDERED IF YOU THINK . . .

ANSWER: YOU THINK AMERICANS INVENTED HUMAN RIGHTS?

QUESTION: NO, NOT AMERICANS, BUT IT'S A WESTERN IDEA. WHAT DO YOU THINK HUMAN RIGHTS. . . THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND ALL THESE THINGS THAT WE PRIZE SO DEARLY . . . MEANS TO A THAI FARMER, FOR INSTANCE.

ANSWER: I THINK IT MEANS THAT IF A THAI FARMER IS PICKED UP BY A LOCAL POLICEMAN AND PUT INTO JAIL, AND HIS FAMILY DOESN'T KNOW WHERE HE IS OR HE ISN'T ABLE TO GET A LAWYER, THOSE THINGS MATTER. NOT THAT THAT HAPPENS TO THAI FARMERS.

QUESTION: I DOESN'T?

ANSWER: I DIDN'T SAY IT DID OR IT DIDN'T; BUT IN ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION, I DON'T WANT TO BE STRUNG OUT ON THIS EITHER. THE FACT OF IT IS THAT YOU'VE ASKED ME WHAT IT MEANS TO A THAI FARMER. WHAT IT MEANS IS THAT IF HE COMES IN CONFLICT WITH THE GOVERNMENT, HE IS ABLE TO PROTECT HIMSELF. IF HE WOULD LIKE TO PETITION HIS GOVERNMENT, HE IS ABLE TO PETITION HIS GOVERNMENT. THOSE THINGS DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. THAI FARMERS, LIKE ALL OTHER PEOPLE, OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO LIVE OUT THEIR LIVES IN SAFETY, SEND THEIR KIDS TO SCHOOL, HAVE SOMETHING ABOUT WHO THEIR GOVERNORS AND LEADERS ARE. ALL PEOPLE WANT THOSE THINGS. AND IT WASN'T ONLY WESTERN NATIONS THAT SIGNED THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS DECLARATION. PRACITICALLY EVERY NATION ON EARTH SIGNED IT. SO THESE ARE NOT STRANGE CONCEPTS TO GOVERNMENTS OR TO PEOPLE.

QUESTION: BUT, YOU KNOW . . .

ANSWER: I'VE REALLY GOT TO GO CATCH MY PLANE SO LET'S NOT STRING IT OUT TOO FAR. GO AHEAD.

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QUESTION: I WAS JUST GOING TO SAY THAT MANY PEOPLE AND THAIS AND THEY'RE NOT ALL COMMUNISTS EIGHER, FEEL THE UNITED STATES IS OVERBEARING IN ITS POLICY OF HUMAN RIGHTS, AND YOU KNOW, THEY ASK THE QUESTION OF WHAT RIGHT IS IT OF AMERICA TO TELL US HOW TO RUN OUR SOCIETY.

ANSWER: WE DON'T TELL ANYONE HOW TO RUN THEIR SOCIETY.

QUESTION: BUT THERE IS THAT PRESSURE WHICH WAS POINTED OUT EARLIER. THERE IS COERCION, REALLY.

ANSWER: WELL, IF IT SEEMS LIKE COERCION, I'M SORRY. THAT'S NOT WHAT IT IS. WE FOLLOW OUR LAWS, WHICH REQUIRE US IN THREE SEPARATE TRANSACTIONS THAT WE DO WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS, TO VOTE "NO" IN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS OR ABSTAIN ON OCCASION, TO HAVE IN OUR PL-480 FOOD PROGRAM, FOR INSTANCE, AN AGREEMENT THAT THAT FOOD WILL GO TO HUMAN PEOPLE OR THE MONEY FROM ITS SALE WILL, AND THAT WE WILL NOT GIVE SECURITY ASSISTANCE IN CERTAIN CASES. I DON'T THINK THAT'S COERCION. I THINK THAT'S PURELY REASONABLE. WE HAVE LEARNED SOMETHING FROM OUR PAST AND WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED IS THAT WE DON'T NEED TO BE PARTICIPANTS IN CAUSING OTHER PEOPLE PAIN AND SUFFERING.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. 'BYE.

(END TRANSCRIPT)

MCGINLEY

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